

The Church Celebrates

CHRISTMAS

UNIT

4

LESSON
TWO

From Our Hearts to God

We thank you, God our Father, for the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, as a person just like us so we might know God as a friend. Amen.

MY WORLD

Look at the pictures on this page. What is being celebrated?
Check all appropriate answers.

Birth of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ _____

The Resurrection _____

Visit and Adoration of the Wise Men from the East _____

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross carried through Armenia _____

Baptism of Christ by John _____

All that we celebrate on January 6th, Armenian Christmas _____

The Assumption of St. Mary into Heaven _____

The Transfiguration – when Jesus appeared with Moses and Elijah on Mt. Tabor _____

The Revelation of Jesus as the Son of God _____

The reason we do the service of the Blessing of Water on January 6th _____



GOD'S GUIDING WORDS

With all my heart I praise the Lord, and I am glad because of God my Savior. God cares for me, his humble servant... He always shows mercy to everyone who worships him.

Luke 1:46-50



Getting Closer to God

Five Major Feasts Challenge

You have 10 minutes to create something that would teach your classmates about one of these Armenian Church **Daghavar** Events. You may work with a friend or two or you may work alone. Work fast as you only have 10 minutes!

You can

- Make a chart
- Write a song
- Put on a short play
- Draw a picture
- Create a puzzle (crossword, acrostic or other sort of puzzle)
- Write a poem
- Make a movement activity
- Come up with your own idea



Taking a Closer Look

1. Birth of Our Lord Luke 2:1-22
2. Visit of the Wise Men Matthew 2:1-11
3. Baptism of Our Lord Luke 3:21-22

Our Armenian Way

On January 6th, as part of the celebration of the Revelation of Christ or Christmas, the Armenian Church conducts the service of the **Blessing of Water**. A person is chosen to be the Godfather of the Cross. A large bowl of water is brought to the altar. Holy Muron is dripped from a dove container into the water. Then the cross that the Godfather holds is put into the water. The cross represents Jesus and putting it into the water represents his baptism. Prayers are said and hymns are sung for this special celebration. The cross is brought out of the water and the Godfather holds it again. After services are completed, the people come forward and take a portion of the holy water. They kiss the cross the Godfather holds. This is part of how we celebrate Christmas in the Armenian Church.



Time to Celebrate

When is Christmas?

The Early Church (Christianity in the very beginning) decided that the birth of Christ should be celebrated on January 6th. The actual date of Jesus' birth was not known, but the Church wanted to commemorate and celebrate it, so a date was set. At that time there was only one Church. Later, the Church separated into Western (Roman Empire) and Eastern branches.

Almost all churches now celebrate Christmas on December 25th. This is because in the Roman Empire the pagan people celebrated the winter solstice (return of the sun) at that time. Church leaders thought it would be a good idea to replace this pagan feast with the celebration of Christmas.

The Armenian Church continues to celebrate the birth of Christ on the ancient date of January 6. In the Armenian Church we celebrate the revelation of Christ or Epiphany. It includes the **Birth of Jesus**, **Visit of the Wise Men** and the **Baptism of the Lord** when the Dove of the Holy Spirit appeared and God's voice from heaven said "This is my Son."



All holidays have special foods associated with them. In the tradition of the Armenian Church a special dessert called anooshaboor is made by cooking wheat, stewed fruits and nuts together. Yummy!



RESPONDING IN FAITH

Christ is the best gift of Christmas because he is always with us. We never outgrow him; instead we grow with him. Amen.

FAMILY CORNER

Sharing Our Faith

Our lesson today reviewed the Five Major Feast Days (*Daghavar*) of the Armenian Church as well as what we commemorate and celebrate at Armenian Christmas: the Birth of Christ, the Visit of the Wise Men, and the Baptism of the Lord. We read these stories in the Bible, learned about Christmastime blessing of the water and even had a Godfather of the Cross re-enact the blessing! Class ended with a taste of the traditional Armenian Christmas pudding, *anooshaboor*

Living Our Faith

1. Having your home blessed at Christmas and Easter is a tradition of the Armenian Church. Arrange with your priest to have your home blessed.
2. Anoushabour is a traditional Armenian Christmas food. Make it with your fourth grader this year.
3. If Armenian Christmas is on a work/school day this year, plan to take off from work and school and attend church services. Your priest will give you a letter of acknowledgement of our religious holy day for your child's school.